

# Scott City High School

## A+ Handbook



# 2013-2014

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revised April 15, 2013

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## PURPOSE OF THE A+ STUDENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a clear understanding of the various aspects of the A+ Schools Program as established by the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that designation is achieved and maintained. It is the responsibility of the student and parents/guardian to read, understand, and comply with the program requirements. It is the responsibility of the A+ Schools Coordinator to administer the A+ Schools Program in a fair and consistent manner.

**The first step of participation in the A+ Schools Program is the signing of the A+ Schools Participation Agreement and the A+ Schools Citizenship Guidelines by the student and parent/guardian.** After all signatures are obtained, the student is considered to be an A+ student at Scott City High School. It is then the responsibility of the student to continue to meet the requirements to be certified as an A+ student upon graduation.

Once designation is achieved, Scott City High School has a responsibility to maintain the status of an A+ school. It is the responsibility of the A+ Coordinator to certify to the State of Missouri the students who have achieved the A+ status upon graduation. It is realized that some students will not meet the requirements as set forth in the A+ Schools Program. It will be the responsibility of the A+ Coordinator to notify the student and parents if it is determined that a student is not eligible for A+ student status. This handbook is designed to present the guidelines and policies to be followed by the A+ Schools Program.

Please read this handbook carefully. It is provided for parents/guardian, students, and employees of Scott City High School so that a clear understanding of the requirements for becoming an A+ student is achieved.

## GOALS OF THE A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The A+ Schools Program is designed to achieve the three basic goals that are set forth in the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The three goals are the following:

- All students will graduate from high school;
- All students will complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and has identified learning expectations;
- All students will proceed from high school graduation to a college or postsecondary vocational or technical school or high wage job with work place skill development opportunities.

## BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS OF AN A+ SCHOOL

A student who graduates from a designated A+ high school may qualify for a state-paid financial incentive to attend any public community college or career/technical school in Missouri if he/she successfully meets the requirements.

The A+ student financial incentive is dependent upon Scott City High School obtaining and maintaining designated status as an A+ school before the student graduates and the availability of state appropriations from the Missouri General Assembly. Pending designation, the A+ incentives will begin at Scott City High School with the graduating class of 2013. The A+ incentive pays for **tuition and general fees** and is paid directly to the secondary institution from the state department pending state funding.

These benefits will be made available after the student has documented a good faith effort to secure all available federal postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment (file FAFSA).

A student may receive this incentive for two years from the State of Missouri, not Scott City Public Schools. The student must be considered a full-time student by the institution. The student must complete the two years within forty-eight month period after graduation from Scott City High School.

The student's financial incentive is contingent upon state appropriation and allocation of funding and Scott City High School receiving A+ designation. A student who qualifies for the A+ financial assistance must enroll full time and attend one of the following eligible institutions in Missouri:

- A public community college;
- A public vocational or technical school;
- A private vocational or technical school that is a member of the North Central Association is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008, and maintains such accreditation. The school also must be designated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

A+ students are under no obligation to use the A+ financial benefits. The benefits are earned by each individual student and are not transferable to any other student.

Financial need is not a factor in determining an A+ participant's eligibility for A+ benefits. However, an A+ participant is required to complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to make sure he/she is not eligible for any financial aid that does not require repayment.

## A+ SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

A student may enter into this written agreement at any time during his/her high school career. However, due to the requirement to accumulate 50 tutoring hours, it is recommended that the agreement be signed as early as possible. Enrolling in the program early allows the student and parents/guardians to receive regular information on the A+ Schools Program from the A+ Coordinator. It is also beneficial to the student to indicate his/her intent to participate in the program to allow for beneficial monitoring by the A+ Coordinator.

## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the financial incentives of the A+ Schools Program, a student must be certified as a graduate by Scott City High School. The A+ Coordinator has the responsibility to certify that a graduate of Scott City High School has met the criteria for certification.

To be certified as an A+ schools graduate, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- Sign an A+ Schools Participation Agreement and the A+ Schools Citizenship Guidelines;
- Attend an A+ designated high school for three consecutive years immediately prior to graduation;
- Graduate from high school with an unweighted, cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4-point scale (no rounding; 2.499 does not qualify); (6.875 on an 11 pt. scale)
- Maintain at least a 95% attendance record for grades 9-12 (ALL absences count against A+ attendance);
- Perform fifty (50) hours of documented, unpaid tutoring under the supervision of a certified Scott City R-I District employee and the A+ Coordinator;
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and the avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Make a documented, good faith effort to secure all available federal financial aid that does not require repayment through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Register for the selective service (for males 18 and over).
- *Beginning with the senior class of 2015, students must meet one of the following:*
  - (A) *Have achieved a score of advanced or proficient on either the Algebra I or higher (Geometry, Algebra II) end-of-course exam; or*
  - (B) *Have achieved a qualifying score, as established annually by the CBHE, on the COMPASS exam or the math component of the ACT test.*

## ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT

A student must be enrolled at Scott City High School during the student's entire sophomore, junior, and senior years. If a student withdraws or transfers from Scott City High School, the student will not be considered eligible for the A+ Schools Program. Re-enrollment will not reactivate eligibility unless the school attended while away was an A+ designated school.

A student that enrolls in the Scott City School District after 20 days of his/her sophomore year does not qualify to participate in the A+ Schools Program at Scott City High School unless they transfer from an A+ designated school.

## GRADE POINT REQUIREMENT

To be eligible for the A+ schools financial assistance, the student must graduate with a cumulative, non-weighted grade point average of 2.5 (on 4 point scale) or 6.875 (on an 11 point scale) or above. The cumulative grade point average is for the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years and is calculated using semester grades (not quarter grades). A student with a cumulative average of 2.4999 or lower will not qualify for A+ status. The student's official transcript will serve as evidence of grade point average for admission into an approved Missouri public community college or Missouri public vocational/technical school.

The A+ participant has the responsibility to closely monitor his/her grade point average. Updates will be provided to all A+ students and parents on the students' report card. Final determination of eligibility cannot be made until an A+ participant graduates and his/her final GPA is calculated.

### **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT**

An A+ student is required to maintain a high attendance rate. The student must maintain a 95% or better attendance record for all four years of high school. A student with a 94.999 or lower average will not qualify for A+ status. Approximately, this means missing no more than 32 days of school attendance in a total of four years. On average, this is 8 days a year or 4 days a semester. An A+ student is expected to attend class regularly and be on time for classes. All absences count against the A+ attendance unless school related. The cumulative attendance information will come from the official attendance record kept by the Scott City Public Schools.

Parents/guardians and students will be provided information on the student's attendance on the student's Report Card. However, it is the responsibility of each A+ participant to closely monitor his/her attendance.

Extenuating circumstances such as health problems or accident-related injuries may cause a student to miss long periods of school. In such cases, the student and parent/guardian are to contact the high school office immediately to begin the process of homebound instruction. A student on homebound instruction is allowed to be counted for school attendance.

If there are circumstances that cause a student to be absent but not to qualify for homebound services, the student may submit an appeal for an A+ attendance waiver. The cumulative attendance record information will be sent to the A+ schools student and parent/guardian on the student's Report Card. After receiving this information, the student or parent/guardian can file an appeal of attendance issues with the A+ Coordinator.

Students with specific health histories must make sure that the medical documentation of chronic or long-term health-related problems are on file and such health-related problems shall be considered in a possible appeal situation.

Those submitting an appeal for an A+ waiver of days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with official documentation of the following:

#### **Reason for Absence**

Hospitalization  
Chronic Health Problems or Catastrophic illness/injury  
Court Appearance  
Personal/family calamity  
Religious Holiday  
Funeral

#### **Documentation Required**

Physician's Letter  
Physician's Letter  
Court Letter  
Parent and school counselor's letter  
Religious Leader's letter  
Parent Letter and copy of death certificate, obituary, or memorial pamphlet

A student will not receive a waiver if any absence is due to any of the following:

1. Truancy and/or Skipping Classes
2. Dentist or Orthodontist Visits
3. Personal/Family Vacation
4. Transportation Problems (Unless late on a school bus)
5. Suspended from class or school for any reason
6. Routine Doctor Visits

When all of the information is received, the A+ Review Committee will meet to decide if a waiver of the absences will be granted. The A+ Review Committee will be composed of the principal and two at-large faculty members. The A+ Coordinator will facilitate the appeal but will not be involved in the voting process. After the Committee reaches a

decision, the student and parents/guardian will be notified by letter. The student and parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Scott City R-I Board of Education.

**The A+ attendance requirements are not to be confused with the general attendance requirements as printed in the Scott City High School Student Handbook.**

### **TUTORING REQUIREMENT**

The criteria of the A+ Schools Program requires that students seeking A+ status must perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring for other students. Listed below are the A+ schools guidelines concerning tutoring or mentoring.

- Tutoring/mentoring must be school sponsored.
- The student must go through an orientation/training before the mentoring/tutoring will begin.
- The official time sheet must be signed and dated by the cooperating teacher in charge of that tutoring or mentoring activity.
- Tutoring/mentoring may be done during the school year or during summer school.
- All tutoring/mentoring must be done on school premises.
- All tutoring/mentoring experiences must begin before February 2<sup>nd</sup> in the year the student will graduate.
- The student is expected to be present at the agreed upon day and time for tutoring/mentoring.
- If an absence must occur, the student is expected to notify the adult in charge of the tutoring/mentoring experience.

Tutors will need to schedule tutoring sessions with the A+ Coordinator or the A+ cooperating teacher.

The following list contains possible opportunities that will count toward the 50 hours of unpaid tutoring/mentoring requirement of the A+ Schools Program:

- A+ Course: Counts as ½ credit of practical arts (for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors)
- \*The A+ course is offered during the fall semester, spring semester, and during summer school.
- Elementary School Tutoring/Mentoring
- Middle School Tutoring/Mentoring
- High School Tutoring/Mentoring
- Opportunities as approved by the A+ Coordinator

A current list of approved tutoring/mentoring activities and the contact person for these activities will be posted in the Counselor's Office and the A+ Coordinator's Office.

#### **EXPECTATIONS:**

**Compliance** – The tutor must be meeting the requirements of the A+ Program to take the A+ course. Cumulative grade point average must be at least 6.875 and cumulative attendance must be at least 95%.

**Behavior** – The tutor is expected to behave as the more mature member of the tutoring team. The behavior of the tutor is as important for the person receiving the tutoring as the subject matter. Express confidence in the person's ability and praise his/her successes.

Promptness – The tutor is expected to be on time for tutoring sessions and to use the time wisely.

Compensation – The tutor is not to receive money or other compensation for tutoring. The compensation, upon completion of all requirements, will be tuition and fees for your continued education.

Confidentiality – Confidentiality (both during and after the tutor’s assignment) concerning any student whom the tutor assists is required in order to participate. Privileged information given by the student, the student’s parents, and/or teachers must be kept private and confidential. If your student reaches out to you with problems that require outside help, immediately report this to the supervising teacher before leaving the building.

**TERMINATION OF OPPORTUNITY:**

Any single significant action, or repeated actions, in violation of school district policy or procedures may result in the termination of the opportunity to tutor. The student will then be assigned another class if scheduled in an A+ course during the school day. Disclosure of information to others not involved with the tutee will be considered a breach of contract and could result in dismissal from the A+ tutoring program and/or other disciplinary action.

**CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT**

Participation in the A+ Schools Program requires certain behaviors and attitudes. Specifically, a student who participates in the A+ Schools Program must be a good citizen and be judged so by the proper school authorities.

A student whose character or conduct is such as to discredit his/her school is not considered a good citizen. His/her conduct shall be satisfactory in accordance with the standards of good discipline. A student who participates in the A+ Schools Program should remember not only the financial rewards but also the individual discipline and responsibilities that come with it.

The following criteria regarding the school’s discipline policy will serve as a measurable indicator of respect for self, school, and good citizenship:

**Criminal Activity:**

A student who is convicted of a verifiable misdemeanor or felony will not qualify.

**Substance Abuse:**

A student shall not possess or use alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or controlled substances. Any violation of the student alcohol/drug abuse policy will result in loss of eligibility for the program.

**Suspension:**

A student will lose eligibility if he/she accumulates more than eight (8) days of suspension (ISS and OSS) during his/her high school career. Suspension records for eligible students who transfer from another district will be used to determine eligibility.

**Violations of Safe Schools Act:**

A student who is disciplined in accordance with the Safe Schools Act of 1996 will lose eligibility for the A+ Schools Program. These violations include, but are not limited to, assault, weapons possession, and drug distribution.

**Due Process:**

A student who believes that he/she has been declared ineligible for the A+ Schools Program unfairly may appeal to the A+ Schools Appeals Committee. In cases of appeal, the student or parent/guardian must notify the A+ Coordinator in writing of his/her intent to appeal within 10 days of receiving the written ineligibility letter. An A+ Appeals Committee shall hear the appeal and return its decision to the student. The A+ Schools Appeals Committee will consist of the

principal and two faculty members. The decision of the committee can be appealed to the Scott City R-I School Board of Education. The A+ Coordinator will facilitate the appeal but will not be involved in the voting process.

### **GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO SECURE FUNDING**

Parents/guardians must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid by April 1 of the student's senior year. The FAFSA information must be sent to the eligible postsecondary institution that the student is planning to attend. The FAFSA application form is available in the guidance counselor's office or online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Verification that the FAFSA has been filed must be provided to the A+ Coordinator. All parents/guardians of graduating seniors must meet the FAFSA deadline of April 1 to be eligible for A+ funding. Students that meet A+ requirements but do not plan on attending college immediately, must complete the current year's FAFSA during the senior year, as well as at the time you plan to enter college in order to be eligible for A+.

### **ACCESSING TUITION BENEFITS**

Upon high school graduation, an A+ graduate will have a forty-eight month window to complete six semesters of eligible funding. The A+ financial incentive covers tuition and common fees.

An A+ eligible graduate must inform the post-secondary institution to which he/she has made application of his/her intent to use the financial incentives. The institution will prepare the necessary paperwork and bill the State of Missouri. Final high school transcripts of eligible graduates will be stamped with the A+ seal. In order to receive the financial incentives, a student must be enrolled full-time. A student may enroll in an eligible post-secondary institution in any fall semester, spring semester, summer session or other term identified by the institution immediately following the official spring graduation date of the student's respective class.

An eligible A+ graduate may choose, or find necessary, to delay his/her enrollment in an eligible postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation. Regardless of the reason for this delay, a student has a maximum of 48 consecutive months from high school graduation during which A+ benefits may be accessed.

The A+ student must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA while at any postsecondary institution. In order to be eligible to receive A+ financial incentives for a subsequent term a student must have completed a minimum of a full-time academic load for the semester. A student must have achieved a 2.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale on hours taken at any institution.

If a student does not complete the minimum full-time requirement and/or has a cumulative GPA that falls below the 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale, the student is not eligible to receive an A+ schools financial incentive for the following semester.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Missouri Department of Higher Education  
<http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php>